

Practice good sportsmanship at all times



Brian Smatt

News from PRNA

How do you define sportsmanship?

Is it as simple as letting your friend win once in a while on the golf course

or the tennis court?

Or is it best defined as a youth sports coach instructing his soccer players not to score any more when they are winning 12-0 ... in the first half?

What about examples of bad sportsmanship?

They occur at all levels of competition. Those who have been involved with competitive athletics know what I am talking about. You don't have to be around recreational programs to see them first hand.

For example, take the comments made this past week by supermodel Gisele Bündchen, wife of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady. Bündchen pretty much blamed the Patriots' receivers for not winning the Super Bowl.

To be fair, Brady didn't mention in his post-game comments the same thoughts she had, but instead built up his teammates. This example shows the highs and lows of sportsmanship.

Last week also showed the ugliness of sportsmanship when over 75 people were killed after a soccer match in Egypt. This example is an extreme display of bad sportsmanship.

Unfortunately, as a youth sports supervisor I have seen both positive and negative examples of sportsmanship, and we've all seen or heard about problems at youth sports venues.

Consider these latest headlines in the latest Sporting Kid, a quarterly publication by the National Alliance for Youth Sports, in a section called, "Out of Bounds:"

■ Two youth teams

banned following soccer brawl.

■ Youth football melee injures four.

■ Brawl after youth football game leads to arrest.

■ Police respond to disturbance at youth baseball game.

These are real headlines across our country that unfortunately shows what can happen when parents, coaches and kids don't demonstrate proper sportsmanship. As we enter the spring and welcome the baseball and softball seasons, it's a reminder to all of us to demonstrate our best behavior at all times.

The City's Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Affairs Department takes an active role informing our coaches, participants and parents of the need to practice good sportsmanship at all times. It's also one of the reasons why we emphasize this at all of our athletic events and leagues held throughout the year.

It's everyone's responsibility to show this type of sportsmanship even when human nature tells us not to. Former Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne once said, "One man practicing sportsmanship is better than a hundred teaching it."

So the next time you visit a park during a sporting event and the umpire or referee misses an obvious call, remember we don't want to be a future headline or be the lead story on the evening news. Understand that life lessons for our children are being learned, both on and off the playing field, and that we as adults must maintain the responsibility to practice good sportsmanship during athletic events.

For more information on youth programs sponsored by the City of Tallahassee Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Affairs Department, please visit Talgov.com/parks, like us on Facebook or call 891-3866.

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